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Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) until 30 June 2017 and requested me to report, every 90 days, on its implementation. The report provides an update on and analysis of the conflict, the political situation and the operational environment in Darfur, including the main challenges to the effective implementation of the mandate, from 28 September to 15 December 2016. It also presents the steps taken by UNAMID towards achieving its benchmarks and provides an update on the transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team and the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID.

II. Conflict dynamics and security situation

2. There was no major armed conflict in Darfur during the reporting period. Nevertheless, the situation remained volatile in the absence of progress towards a comprehensive agreement addressing the root causes of the violence. Hostilities involving the armed movements decreased as a result of the government military offensive, which limited the armed rebellion to a small part of the Jebel Marra, and the effect of the rainy season on the mobility of military forces. There were fewer intercommunal clashes than in previous years. The overall security situation was, however, affected by seasonal competition and unresolved disputes over land, water and resources, as well as by the proliferation of weapons and impunity, which continued to fuel intercommunal tensions and conflict. There were reports of criminal acts and human rights violations perpetrated by organized criminal groups and militias against civilians, including displaced persons, and a number of attacks against military and police forces.

Fighting between government forces and armed movements

3. In his address at the concluding session of the Conference of National Dialogue, held in Khartoum on 10 October, the President of the Sudan, Omar Hassan A. Al-Bashir, announced the extension of the Government's unilateral

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ceasefire in Darfur and the Two Areas. The announcement followed the Government's claim to have seized control of the Jebel Marra as part of its military offensive since the beginning of 2016 and of the conclusion of the Darfur conflict in September. As a consequence of the territorial losses suffered during the offensive, as well as internal fracturing, the armed rebellion in Darfur was limited to the presence of fighters from the Abdul Wahid faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA/AW) within a narrow area of territory inside the western Jebel Marra.

4. According to several reports, the SLA/AW presence was composed of small mobile groups of fighters operating east and south-west of Sarong, north-east of Nertiti, Central Darfur. The Government has described the SLA/AW operations in the area as an effort by the armed movement, and in particular its leader, Abdul Wahid al-Nour, to demonstrate continued political relevance amid military losses and internal fracturing rather than as viable military operations. While the SLA/AW leadership publicly denied any weakening of the armed movement, on 4 November, 222 of its members, led by a former commander in the Sarong area, signed a peace agreement with the government of Central Darfur in Koron, south of Golo. The agreement provided for security arrangements, power-sharing and a government commitment to providing developmental assistance to the area. On 21 November, members of the armed faction were reported to have reached Khartoum to sign the National Dialogue outcome document. Similarly, on 20 November, 16 persons claiming to be SLA/AW members from the Jebel Si area signed a peace agreement with the government of that state.

5. Its confinement to a limited area in the Jebel Marra notwithstanding, SLA/AW reportedly attacked the Sudanese military in Sarong on 19 November, injuring 16 soldiers. In response, on 4 December, the military reportedly fired artillery rounds at SLA/AW positions in the area east of Nertiti. UNAMID was unable to verify the reports or the impact of the fighting, owing to the continued denial of access to the area by the Government.

6. There have been no reports of fighting between the Government and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Minni Minawi faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA/MM) since April 2015 and April 2016, respectively. Following the President's announcement of a ceasefire, the two armed movements, as part of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, announced their own six-month unilateral cessation of hostilities for humanitarian purposes on 30 October. On 25 November, after continued reports regarding the presence of armed movements from Darfur in South Sudan, the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, directed his country's security organs and armed forces to ensure that any rebel movements from the Sudan were removed and prevented from operating from South Sudan by the end of November.

7. On 29 September, Amnesty International published a report in which it alleged the use of chemical weapons against civilians by government forces, in addition to other violations of human rights and humanitarian law, as part of their offensive in the Jebel Marra since the beginning of 2016. The Government strongly rejected the allegations as having no merit, maintaining that it had no such weapons and that its industrial facilities, both military and civilian, remained open for investigation by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In its initial statement, the Organization, which examined the allegations made in the report, indicated that,

without further information and evidence being made available, it was not possible at that stage to draw any conclusion in that regard. UNAMID has not come across any evidence regarding the use of chemical weapons in the Jebel Marra. At the same time, the mission has been denied unfettered access to the conflict areas. On 28 October, the administration of the Hasahisa camp for internally displaced persons submitted a petition in which the international community was called upon to dispatch an inspection team to probe the Government's chemical and other weapons.

Local conflicts and intercommunal violence

8. The past three months were characterized by several intercommunal clashes resulting from disputes over access to land and resources during the migration and farming seasons and cattle-rustling incidents that were significantly exacerbated by the inadequacy of rule of law and judicial institutions and the proliferation of weapons. In this environment, state governments, native administrations and traditional leaders maintained their efforts to prevent and respond to such occurrences through security measures, engagement with stakeholders and the facilitation of cessation of hostilities agreements and reconciliation processes.

9. In South Darfur, with the continuing migration and farming seasons, significant tensions were reported in Buram and Graida. On 9 October and 5 November, members of the Fallata and Salamat tribes clashed as a result of cattle-rustling in Wad Hagam and Nadhif, near Buram, resulting in 10 fatalities. In addition to the deployment of troops to these locations by the Government to prevent a further escalation of the fighting, a peace committee was established, comprising the native administrations of both communities and local authorities, in attempt to address their disputes over access to resources and ensure the implementation of the agreement that they signed in September 2015. On 9 November, clashes between Habbaniya, reportedly with support from Fallata, and Salamat nomads triggered by cattle theft in Merifin, south-west of Buram, left six Habbaniya and four Salamat tribespeople dead. The violence did not spread further following the deployment of additional government forces and the commitment by local leaders that the incidents in question would be treated as criminal acts.

10. In Graida, following the attempted rape of Masalit girls by armed Rizeigat tribespeople in Um Sharanah, clashes between the two groups on 8 November left four Rizeigat and two Masalit tribespeople dead. The paramount chief of the Rizeigat visited the area from Ed Daein to defuse tensions and prevent the further mobilization of his community, while local authorities engaged with the Masalit for the same purpose. Nonetheless, on 16 November, Masalit farmers killed two Rizeigat nomads who allegedly grazed their cattle on their farm in Dimasoya, south of Graida. On 17 and 18 November, Rizeigat retaliatory attacks in Joghana and Dimasoya resulted in the further killing of 21 Rizeigat and 10 Masalit tribespeople, bringing the total number of fatalities to 27 Rizeigat and 12 Masalit tribespeople. Following a meeting of local authorities and native administrations on the same day, it was agreed that all Rizeigat herders would leave the locality until the end of the farming season in mid-January 2017 and that a reconciliation meeting would be held in December 2016.

11. In West Darfur, an outstanding dispute over compensation for killings in previous cattle-rustling incidents resulted in clashes between Zaghawa tribespeople

and the Awlad Zaid subclan of the Northern Rizeigat in Kulbus, on the Sudanese border with Chad, on 30 and 31 October and led to 16 fatalities and abductions on both sides. The Governor of West Darfur and joint Sudanese-Chadian forces responded swiftly to halt the violence. On 13 November, together with the local Chadian authorities, they facilitated a reconciliation conference between the two groups in which the parties agreed to exchange abductees. Fighting nevertheless resumed on 25 November, when Awlad Zaid tribespeople attacked Zaghawa tribespeople near Birak, across the border in Chad, resulting in four fatalities, including a Chadian soldier. Amid calls for revenge and reports of mobilization by the communities, the situation in the Jebel Moon area remains tense.

12. With regard to intercommunal fighting in East Darfur, the government-organized separate talks with the Southern Rizeigat and Ma'aliya tribespeople in Khartoum from 4 to 6 October resulted in no further progress in resolving their dispute over land and resources in Adilla and Abu Karinka. Accordingly, tensions remained high. On 14 and 15 October, two Ma'aliya tribespeople were killed following a series of cattle-rustling incidents in Abu Karinka. A further escalation was prevented thanks to the expedient intervention of the state government and the leaders of the two communities, which resulted in an agreement on compensation on 17 October.

13. In North Darfur, tensions continued between internally displaced Fur and Northern Rizeigat tribespeople in Sortony in the aftermath of Northern Rizeigat attacks on internally displaced persons, including at the gathering site for such persons, in May and amid accusations of cattle-rustling and destruction of crops by the Fur, including SLA/AW elements. On 27 October, local nomad leaders prevented internally displaced persons from having access to the water point in the area. The blockade was lifted on 13 November following engagement by UNAMID with local leaders in Kabkabiyah and Sortony. The nomads continue to block commercial traffic along the Kabkabiyah-Sortony road. The government-led reconciliation process organized through the Kabkabiyah harvest prevention and conflict management committee is yet to reach a successful conclusion.

Violence against internally displaced persons

14. Internally displaced persons were a target in 201 crimes that led to 26 fatalities. They attributed most of the crimes to government security personnel or pro-government militias. The most affected areas were Kutum, Kabkabiyah, Korma, Shangil Tobaya, Tawilah and Sortony in North Darfur, El Geneina, Kuraynik and Murnei in West Darfur and Zalingei, Nertiti and Thur in Central Darfur. In October, the security situation in the vicinity of the Sisi camp for internally displaced persons, west of El Geneina in West Darfur, deteriorated significantly, with reports of the presence of armed Arab militias and attacks on internally displaced Masalit farmers, including women. On 18 October, the Governor of West Darfur and local leaders facilitated an agreement between the Masalit and Tama communities and committed themselves to ensuring that the perpetrators of criminal acts would be brought to justice. Also in October, a series of attacks by camel herders in the area of Thur, Central Darfur, resulted in the displacement of some 200 people to Nertiti, Kass and Nyala, South Darfur. On 19 November, many Mahariya militiamen in vehicles mounted with guns entered the Kassab camp for internally displaced persons, north-east of Kutum, North Darfur, causing widespread panic. A few days

earlier, Mahariya tribespeople had blocked the road from Kutum to El Fasher in protest at the arrest of their leader by the National Intelligence and Security Service earlier in November.

15. The personal security of displaced communities was further affected by an increase in arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions, especially in South and West Darfur. On 19 and 20 October, for example, at least six internally displaced leaders were arrested on charges of organizing a demonstration in El Geneina, West Darfur, the previous day. On 18 October, in Kario, west of Ed Daein, East Darfur, the police used disproportionate force while searching the refugee camp, arresting 11 South Sudanese in the process and charging them with various offences, including resisting arrest and brewing alcohol. Eight of them were sentenced in a swift trial and remanded in custody at the Ed Daein state prison. On 1 October, four of the remaining seven individuals arrested at camps for internally displaced persons in Central Darfur after a meeting with the United States Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan on 31 July were released from the custody of the National Intelligence and Security Service, while the remaining three have been transferred from Zalingei to Khartoum.

Crime and banditry

16. A total of 659 criminal incidents and 122 fatalities were recorded, compared with 570 incidents and 110 fatalities during the previous reporting period. Those comprised assault/harassment (206 cases), shooting (149 cases), murder (86 cases), armed robbery (49 cases), burglary/break-ins (41 cases), livestock theft (43 cases), abduction (31 cases), attempted robbery (16 cases), threats of violence (14 cases), attack/ambush (8 cases), looting (4 cases), arson (2 cases) and other incidents (10 cases).

17. The reporting period also witnessed several attacks on soldiers and police officers by organized armed groups and militias. For example, a joint military and police force deployed to verify reports of crop destruction clashed with Arab herders in Um Tearent, north of Shangil Tobaya, North Darfur, on 15 November, leaving a soldier and a herder dead. On 17 November, an armed group attacked a police checkpoint along the El Fasher-Khartoum road in the village of Kathkara, east of El Fasher, killing three officers and injuring two others and seizing assault rifles and machine guns.

III. Political developments

Darfur peace process

18. Since the signing in August by JEM and SLA/MM of the road map agreement sponsored by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, no tangible progress has been made in the Darfur peace process following persistent disagreements among the parties on modalities for the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access. The Panel and UNAMID continued their engagement with the parties in an attempt to bridge the differences, in particular over the future role of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in the negotiations and the modalities for the disclosure of JEM and SLA/MM locations in Darfur.

19. At the request of JEM and SLA/MM and with the endorsement of the President of the Sudan, the President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, has been facilitating the Darfur negotiations since May. Meetings with the leadership of JEM and SLA/MM in Kampala on 19 October served as a platform for informal discussions. The President of Chad, Idriss Deby Itno, also remained involved in efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis and met the leadership of JEM and SLA/AW in Berlin on 12 October, reportedly urging them to join the National Dialogue process in Khartoum, which had been concluded two days previously.

20. Besides the lack of progress in the peace process, the reporting period was marked by reports of divisions within the armed movements. In addition to the above-mentioned split within SLA/AW, the Chair of JEM, Gibril Ibrahim, relieved the secretary of the Movement, Abu Bakr Hamid, from his position on 1 December. According to media sources, Hamid, who has good personal relations with the President of Chad, was reportedly more responsive to the latter's efforts to persuade JEM to join the National Dialogue. On 3 December, further to the commitment made when declaring its unilateral cessation of hostilities, JEM released 22 Sudanese military prisoners and the four remaining commanders of JEM/Sudan who were in its custody.

National Dialogue process

21. On 10 October, the General Assembly of the National Dialogue, in which 79 political parties and 28 armed movements participated, adopted an outcome document containing 981 recommendations developed by six committees. It outlined a federal and presidential system of government, a two-chamber parliament, with one chamber for deputies and the other for the Council of States, and the separation of the three branches of government. It endorsed principles of democracy and underlined the concept of equal citizenship and the diverse Sudanese identity. On 26 October, the Dialogue secretariat presented the document to the National Assembly as the basis for the drafting of a new permanent constitution within three months. On 5 December, the Higher Coordination Committee of the Dialogue was dissolved and a new committee established to follow up on the implementation of the document.

22. The Government and some countries in the region hailed the National Dialogue as a success. Opposition groups, however, were critical, arguing that the outcome document, in addition to the President's address at the closing session, on 10 October, while reasserting the broad principles of good governance and unity, remained vague and non-committal on key issues such as the permanent constitution, political rights, the role of the security services and implementation measures. In addition, the Sudan Call coalition maintained that the Dialogue was not an inclusive and consensual process as agreed upon in the road map agreement and that its conclusions could only form the basis for a new, broader process that it would be ready to join under certain conditions.

23. Following the Government's decision, on 3 November, to cut fuel and electricity subsidies in order to prevent inflation, small protests erupted in Khartoum, El Fasher, Nyala and several other locations. The authorities arrested 21 members of opposition parties, including the Chair of the National Congress Party, accused of inciting the overthrow of the regime. On 25 November, political

activists called for mass civil disobedience from 27 to 29 November. Protests, mainly led by students, were reported in Khartoum, Omdurman, El Fasher and several other locations, as were arrests by the security services. Personnel from the National Intelligence and Security Service also reportedly shut down media outlets critical of the austerity measures.

IV. Humanitarian situation

24. In 2016, humanitarian partners have verified some 97,000 newly displaced persons (53,000 in North Darfur, 29,000 in South Darfur and 15,000 in Central Darfur), primarily as a result of the fighting in the Jebel Marra, while up to an additional 88,000 reported people have not been verified owing to a lack of access to the relevant locations. While the internally displaced received basic humanitarian assistance, gaps were identified in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene, protection and livelihoods in some locations in North and South Darfur.

25. In North Darfur, 17 new arrivals from Golo were registered during the reporting period, while no new arrivals were reported in South Darfur. Displacement figures have been verified in all known areas of displacement in South Darfur, except in Deribat where humanitarian access to some 800 people continued to be denied by the Government. In Central Darfur, some 5,000 internally displaced persons were verified in the town of Zalingei and 10,500 in Guldo. Some 30,000 individuals reportedly returned, including 25,000 in Golo. There are unverified reports that more than 41,000 people are displaced or affected in Nertiti, Rockero, Thur, Daya and Fanga Suk, while an additional 45,000 people are reportedly displaced in the Buri and Wadi Buri area.

V. Operating environment

Attacks and restrictions of movement on and denials of access to the mission

26. United Nations personnel and property were targeted in 31 criminal incidents, comprising 2 abductions, 4 armed robberies, 8 break-ins and thefts, 2 cases of trespassing, 10 stone-throwing incidents, 1 case of a threat to a staff member, 2 cases of shooting/intimidation and 2 cases of hostile surveillance, compared with 19 incidents during the previous reporting period. On 24 November, armed men abducted four national staff along the road to the mission's supercamp in Nyala and released them later the same day, without their belongings, in Duma, 45 km north-west of the town. A day earlier, the National Intelligence and Security Service arrested a UNAMID national staff member in Nyala for an alleged security violation. UNAMID is engaging with the Service regarding the person's status.

27. As at 15 December, UNAMID had experienced 67 access denials or restrictions on its ground patrols imposed by the Government and internally displaced young people in Darfur. While the mission's access to previously reported conflict areas inside the Jebel Marra continued to be denied, similar restrictions were placed on its patrols in the aftermath of intercommunal violence in Graida, South Darfur, and Foro Burunga, West Darfur, respectively, on 26 and 27 November. From 3 to 6 November, the government of West Darfur restricted the

mission's flights and ground movement to and from its camp in El Geneina, a move that had a severe impact on its operations and the safety and security of its personnel. UNAMID experienced 29 flight clearance denials, 26 of which occurred in the above-mentioned incident in El Geneina. The Sudanese authorities also imposed additional restrictions on the mission's flights in the form of non-approval of direct flights between team sites in different sectors and limiting the window for air operations.

Access denials and restrictions imposed on humanitarian actors

28. Insecurity continued to have an impact on humanitarian activities in Darfur. On 28 September, SLA/AW elements abducted two humanitarian workers in Sortony, North Darfur, accusing them of spying for the Government, before releasing them the same day. On 18 October, a police raid in the newly established Kario refugee camp in East Darfur was conducted without notifying humanitarian actors beforehand. Both incidents resulted in the temporary disruption of humanitarian activities. In North Darfur, intercommunal tensions in Sortony caused the continued blocking of the road to Kabkabiyah, hindering the free movement of internally displaced persons and commercial traffic and affecting water, sanitation and hygiene services, in November.

29. Humanitarian actors also continued to face bureaucratic impediments in the form of delays and rejections of intra-state travel permits, in particular for areas in which internally displaced persons affected by the conflict in the Jebel Marra reportedly settled. Cross-line access remained impossible, rendering some areas in the central and western Jebel Marra inaccessible, while access in other areas of the Jebel Marra remained challenging. Of 21 requests for inter-agency assessments in Deribat, Golo, Neriti, Thur, Guldo and Buri and Wadi Buri (Central and South Darfur), 3 were denied and 14 remain pending. Some single-agency requests were granted, but not for all sectors, with protection activities, for example, encountering challenges. Missions in these areas often involved heavy government monitoring. Furthermore, the inconsistent application of procedures between states in Darfur, and between the state and the federal levels, also had an impact on humanitarian operations. A request for an inter-agency mission to Lait, North Darfur, where between 5,000 and 11,000 refugees have reportedly settled, has been pending since July.

Visas and customs clearances

30. The Government granted 557 visas for UNAMID, of which 330 were for military and police personnel and 23 for international staff. Of these, the Government granted a visa request for a human rights officer, which was the first granted for the Human Rights Section in a year. As at 8 December, 117 visa requests submitted since January remained pending, of which 30 were for civilian staff. The vacancy rate decreased in the Human Rights Section (46 per cent), the Joint Operations Centre (15 per cent), the Communications and Public Information Division (12 per cent) and the Protection of Civilians Section (11 per cent), while increasing in the Security and Safety Section (16 per cent).

31. The Government cleared all the pending 182 food rations shipments, which are being transported to the mission area. Customs clearance for 251 shipments of

United Nations-owned equipment and contingent-owned equipment, however, remain pending at Port Sudan and in Khartoum. Equipment for the Chinese military utility helicopter unit has been pending clearance by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 10 October, while the ship carrying it has been docked at Port Sudan since 6 November and is accruing demurrage charges. Other shipments include communications equipment, vehicles, printers and waste management systems, some of which have been pending for almost a year. The resulting equipment shortages continue to affect the ability of the troops and formed police units to communicate, conduct patrols and protect civilians. That the Government has also yet to grant UNAMID the certificate of exemption from taxation for goods imported by sea for 2016 has resulted in complications and delays in the release of shipments from ports. The request for 2017 has been submitted but remains pending. Furthermore, UNAMID has asked the Government to grant it an exemption from the newly imposed restrictions on the importation of vehicles that are more than a year old and is awaiting a response.

VI. Mandate implementation

A. Support for an inclusive peace process

High-level mediation

32. During the reporting period, several rounds of informal talks and meetings were conducted with a view to bridging the gap between the positions of the Government and opposition groups, including the rebel movements, on the way forward in the political process. On 1 October, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel facilitated a workshop of the Sudan Call coalition in Addis Ababa to discuss the modalities of its participation in the National Dialogue. The coalition agreed that a preparatory meeting between its representatives and the Government should be held in Addis Ababa after the signing of agreements on the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access in Darfur and the Two Areas.

33. From 30 September to 2 October, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel organized a round of informal consultations in Addis Ababa between the Government and the opposition, during which it encouraged both sides to adjust their approaches in order to maintain the momentum resulting from the signing of the road map agreement. In an effort to break the deadlock on the issue of armed movement locations, UNAMID facilitated a meeting between experts of the Sudanese military, JEM and SLA/MM, also attended by representatives of the Panel and the Office of the United States Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, in Addis Ababa from 27 to 29 November. The parties were, however, unable to agree on the sequencing of the disclosure process. Throughout October and November, envoys from the troika countries (Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) also held meetings with representatives of the Government and armed movements to discuss the way forward in the peace talks.

Implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur

34. Following the formal dissolution of the Darfur Regional Authority in September, during the reporting period the Government appointed an interim secretary-general to coordinate the work of the remaining institutions established under the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur: the Darfur Land Commission, the Voluntary Return and Resettlement Commission, the Justice, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Darfur Security Arrangements Implementation Commission and the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund. The Government is expected to establish a successor body to the Authority under the Ministry of Presidential Affairs in the near future. The Government has also indicated to UNAMID that it will retain the Darfur Social Welfare Fund, which was created through the protocol that it signed with the JEM faction led by Mohamed Bashar, and that an additional body to succeed the Darfur Peace Follow-up Office will be established to provide the necessary political support in this context.

35. UNAMID is engaging with the Government to define the modalities for the mission's continued support for the implementation of the outstanding provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, many of which remain crucial to addressing the root causes and main consequences of the conflict. Some of the key outstanding provisions include long-term tasks relating to the settlement of nomads, improving relations between farmers and nomads, the reform of land legislation, compensation and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, enabling the work of justice and reconciliation institutions, arms control and civilian disarmament. Besides operational and political challenges, unfulfilled pledges by international donors and the Government have been a key reason for their non-implementation.

36. Given the serious funding constraints, the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation process, which was originally envisaged to be conducted within 120 days of the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, has been significantly delayed. As at 15 December, 20 of the 26 planned locality consultations in the second of four phases of the process had been completed. Participants discussed the root causes of the conflict, including issues relating to insecurity, the proliferation of arms, land management, development and the economy, governance, the strengthening of government authority and the empowerment of the native administration, civilian displacement and voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees, and reconciliation. To date, funding in the amount of $2.7 million and €800,000 has been received from the Governments of the Sudan and Qatar and from the European Union, while an estimated $1.4 million remains outstanding to complete the process.

37. On 4 October, in collaboration with the Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, UNAMID concluded the demobilization of 780 ex-combatants from the Liberation and Justice Movement, JEM/Peace Wing, Sudan Liberation Army/Mustafa Terab, Sudan Liberation Army/Mother Wing, Sudan Liberation Army/Free Will, Sudan Liberation Army/Historical Leadership and Popular Forces for the Restoration of Democracy caseload in Central Darfur. On 29 November, the mission began the demobilization of 700 ex-combatants in

El Daein, East Darfur. It also continued the community-based reintegration of 700 ex-combatants that it had demobilized in North and West Darfur.

B. Protection of civilians

38. In accordance with Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), UNAMID continued to focus its activities on protecting internally displaced persons and addressing intercommunal violence. In this context, in coordination with the United Nations country team, it mapped the protection situation in 174 locations hosting internally displaced persons, including camps, gathering sites and communities. The exercise measured approximate numbers of internally displaced persons, the main protection issues, response capacities and risk levels. The findings pointed to a need to tailor protection activities to specific challenges facing civilians at the local level, as well as the vulnerability of internally displaced persons in relation to livelihood activities, hence touching upon intercommunal dynamics. UNAMID and the country team are identifying additional mitigation measures to resolve these concerns, together with mechanisms to explore and support the voluntary and sustainable return process in this context.

Provision of physical protection

39. UNAMID continued to provide physical protection through military and police patrols to prevent, deter and respond to situations in which civilians are under threat of physical violence, especially in areas of large displacement. The mission conducted day and night patrols inside and outside camps and gathering sites for internally displaced persons, with a focus on those adjacent to its team sites. It also contributed to the prevention of intercommunal conflict through regular engagement with local communities, using early warning networks on protection and security issues, military and police field monitoring and assessment missions and targeted patrols.

40. In Sortony and Tawilah, areas with considerable displacement as a result of the fighting between government and SLA/AW forces during the first half of 2016, the mission provided around-the-clock protection to the displaced, while the protection situation in other camps for internally displaced persons was monitored through regular patrols. On 28 September, a UNAMID patrol for the Sortony team site successfully secured the release of a civilian detained by members of SLA/AW. On 15 November, the mission's troops prevented some 20 armed militiamen from entering the gathering site for internally displaced persons in Sortony in search of stolen camels.

41. In total, UNAMID conducted 20,369 military patrols, including 7,318 routine, 8,933 short-range, 402 long-range and 2,389 night patrols, in addition to 392 humanitarian and 876 logistical and administrative escorts, visiting villages 6,300 times and camps and gathering sites for internally displaced persons 2,497 times. Its police personnel conducted 5,779 patrols, compared with 5,051 patrols in the same period in 2015, comprising 3,027 confidence-building patrols to camps for internally displaced persons and 2,752 patrols to protect women and children engaged in livelihood activities outside the camps. The increase can be attributed to enhanced human resources in terms of individual police officers, coupled with

better coordination with their military counterparts. The patrols continued to maintain a secure and stable environment and deter violence against civilians.

Logistical and security support to humanitarian operations

42. As at 30 November, UNAMID had provided 248 round-trip escorts for humanitarian partners in support of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and monitoring of the humanitarian and protection situation, most of which in Central and South Darfur. The escorts were provided for, among other things, food distribution among conflict-affected people in the Jebel Marra (Golo, Guldo and Rockero) and for needs assessment missions to the Jebel Marra by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Promoting a protective environment

43. As part of its efforts to promote a protective environment in Darfur, UNAMID continued to monitor, report on and advocate the prevention of human rights violations and abuses, conflict-related sexual violence, sexual and gender-based violence and violations against children, as well as the reduction of the risk posed to civilians by explosive remnants of war. The mission also provided technical expertise to strengthen the capacity of penal and judicial institutions, including through the training of police, corrections and judicial officers and community policing volunteers.

44. A total of 544 criminal cases were reported to the UNAMID police component, compared with 448 in the same period in 2015. This resulted in 63 arrests by the country's police force in 2016, compared with 91 in 2015. To improve access to justice and the rule of law in Darfur, UNAMID police officers carried out capacity-building training for 415 Sudanese police officers, giving courses on detention and suspect treatment, explosive remnants of war, small arms and light weapons, community policing, public order management, basic criminal investigation and human rights, while also training community policing volunteers. Such initiatives have strengthened the relationship between UNAMID and Sudanese police officers.

45. As part of crime prevention efforts in camps for internally displaced persons, 542 community policing volunteers participated in 209 joint patrols. UNAMID also held 392 awareness-raising sessions for internally displaced persons on issues relating to crime and safety, in addition to conducting seven training workshops for 257 internally displaced persons and volunteers on community policing, road safety, human rights and peer counselling. UNAMID visited police stations and detention centres to monitor the conditions of children in juvenile detention centres, including those living with their mothers, on 1,538 occasions. The mission also conducted 16 workshops for 724 internally displaced persons and 13 workshops for government police officers on gender mainstreaming, gender equality, sexual exploitation and abuse. A total of 3,137 internally displaced persons and 225 police officers throughout Darfur benefited from English classes, improving interaction between UNAMID police officers and the displaced in sharing information and reporting on the security situation and sexual and gender-based violence.

46. In September, the mission completed the refurbishment of a women's wing at Shallah prison in El Fasher through a quick-impact project. In October, six inmates

from the prison graduated from the first vocational skills training programme supported by UNAMID, while similar programmes are continuing in El Geneina and Nyala. In November, UNAMID conducted six training workshops for 180 Sudanese prison officers, including 50 women, on management and operations. Further to the mission's advocacy, the authorities authorized the establishment of new courts in Masteri and Kuraynik, West Darfur, areas characterized by the absence of formal rule of law institutions and recent incidents of intercommunal conflict.

47. UNAMID documented 106 new incidents of human rights violations and abuses involving 214 victims (including 7 children), compared with 117 incidents involving 303 victims in the previous reporting period. Violations of the right to life accounted for 29 cases involving 47 victims (1 of whom was a child), the right to physical integrity for 39 cases involving 71 victims and sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence in the form of rape, for 21 cases involving 33 victims (4 of whom were children). In addition, eight cases of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention involving 23 victims were documented. There were eight abductions involving 27 victims. One case involving 13 victims pertained to intercommunal clashes between Zaghawa and Awlad Zaid tribespeople in West Darfur. UNAMID confirmed 59 cases of human rights violations and abuses involving 111 victims, while the remaining 47 cases involving 103 victims could not be verified owing to access restrictions imposed by the Government. Of the 106 incidents reported, 18 cases involving 43 victims were reported as having been perpetrated by government security forces and allied groups. The remaining 88 cases with 171 victims were allegedly perpetrated by unidentified armed men, often described by the victims as Arabs. In their interaction with UNAMID, victims, including internally displaced persons, highlighted the lack of police action in initiating investigations and apprehending alleged perpetrators. Social stigma and low rates of reporting continued to hinder access to justice, forcing many victims of sexual violence to resort to traditional settlement mechanisms, which often accord priority to maintaining social cohesion over promoting criminal accountability.

48. UNAMID also documented allegations of grave violations against children, including 21 cases of killing and maiming by gunshots and items of unexploded ordnance, 8 cases of rape of girls, 2 cases of abduction, 3 cases of recruitment and use of children and 3 cases of attacks on schools and hospitals. In North Darfur, UNAMID noted with concern the detention of 15 children for offences relating to theft and truancy since October by police in El Fasher. On 20 October, a general criminal court in El Geneina, West Darfur, convicted two juvenile offenders, of 17 and 16 years of age, of murder and sentenced them to five-year reformatory sentences in the absence of social workers, which constituted a violation of the Child Act of 2010.

49. In collaboration with UNICEF, UNAMID continued to support the Government to implement the action plan to end the recruitment and use of children in government forces signed in March. On 21 September, following United Nations engagement, the Government issued a presidential pardon to and released 21 children whom it claimed had been captured in clashes with JEM in 2015. They were handed over to UNICEF and the National Council for Child Welfare in Khartoum, where they were provided with reintegration, family tracing and, in cooperation with UNAMID, reunification support. In Geneva on 22 and

23 November, UNAMID and UNICEF discussed further steps with JEM and SLA/MM to fulfil the commitments made in their earlier agreements with the United Nations on ending and preventing the recruitment and use of children in their forces. During the reporting period, UNAMID conducted training on child protection and the rights of the child for national institutions and local communities, benefiting 839 participants (368 women and 471 men), of whom 68 were police officers, 32 military personnel and 739 internally displaced persons and community leaders. Incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, largely in the form of rape and attempted rape, continued to be reported, with correspondingly weak remedial mechanisms at the national level. UNAMID continued to encourage victims to report cases and to monitor the progress of cases in progress to ensure that human rights standards were observed.

50. Explosive ordnance remained a security threat to civilians, killing three children and severely injuring five children and a woman during the reporting period. In total, 286 items of unexploded ordnance were located and destroyed, while 21,992 beneficiaries, members of the local population in risk areas, received ordnance risk education. In partnership with the National Mine Action Centre, the mission conducted training for three national clearance teams on the disposal of unexploded ordnance. To support the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, UNAMID constructed six workshops and provided equipment for vocational training for victims of explosive remnants of war in all the states of Darfur, for the benefit of 350 registered persons with disabilities.

C. Local conflict mediation

51. Further to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), UNAMID continued to roll out the mission-wide strategy to tackle intercommunal violence. Internal and external mechanisms for coordination with, respectively, the United Nations country team and state governments have been established in all states, with the exception of East Darfur where discussions are continuing with the state government and native administratio . The governors of the remaining four states have expressed their commitment to leading the coordination efforts and to collaborating with the mission and the country team on developing state-level action plans with defined priority areas. As part of the development of such plans, UNAMID is reviewing stalled peace processes and agreements and engaging with the state governments on how to support them.

52. As part of its efforts to prevent conflict during the continuing migration and farming seasons, UNAMID engaged with stakeholders in Darfur and Khartoum, including native administrations, committees for peaceful coexistence and agriculture, farmers and nomads, local authorities and community leaders on the need to ensure peace and security through dialogue. While both nomadic and farming communities maintained that the mission-facilitated dialogue forums and peacebuilding workshops contributed to improving relations between them, they also noted that the presence of armed nomads around farming areas and the lack of capacity of local conflict resolution mechanisms remained key issues of concern.

53. UNAMID supported reconciliation efforts and peace processes by facilitating dialogue, calling for the effective engagement of government and community

leaders and conducting confidence-building missions to areas of intercommunal conflict. In the aftermath of clashes in Graida, South Darfur, in November, UNAMID conducted integrated team field visits to the area to promote reconciliation between Masalit, Fallata and Rizeigat communities. In East Darfur and Khartoum, UNAMID continued to engage with both governmental and Ma'aliya and Southern Rizeigat leaders in support of the government reconciliation process. In November, in collaboration with local youth groups, the mission facilitated peacebuilding forums in Abu Jabrah and Yasin with the participation of community, women's and youth groups, during which participants reinforced their commitment to peace and reconciliation. On 7 December, UNAMID discussed the status of reconciliation efforts with the Vice-President, Hassabo Abdulrahman, in Ed Daein, along with the Governor of East Darfur, the National Intelligence and Security Service, tribal leaders and other community representatives.

54. In South Darfur, UNAMID conducted two assessment missions to monitor the implementation of the Shataya peace agreement, signed between the Beni Halba, Dajo, Fur, Khuzam, Misseriya and Zaghawa tribes in August, which defined land rights and encouraged returns, peaceful coexistence and the observance of the rule of law. Community leaders reported an improved security situation following the deployment of additional military and police personnel to the area, while the state government noted its financial support aimed at promoting voluntary returns, the return of land to its original owners and the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure in the area.

VII. Transfer of mandated tasks to the United Nations country team and exit strategy

A. Transfer of mandated tasks to and cooperation with the United Nations country team

55. In accordance with Security Council resolutions 2228 (2015) and 2296 (2016), UNAMID has made progress in the gradual transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team, which has a comparative advantage. On 22 November, a joint rule of law programme for Darfur for the period 2016-2019 was adopted, with senior government officials and representatives of UNAMID and the country team attending the signing ceremony in Khartoum. On that basis, a memorandum of understanding between UNAMID and the United Nations Development Programme is being finalized to complete the handover of tasks relating to legal aid by July 2017. Furthermore, the mission continued to hold monthly meetings to consolidate a strategy for joint planning, implementation and information-sharing concerning the women and peace and security agenda. The limited coverage of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in most of North Darfur, the absence of the United Nations Population Fund in Central, East and West Darfur and current budget reductions affecting United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are posing a major challenge.

56. After the completion of the semi-annual report on the implementation of the integrated strategic framework for the period January-June 2016, a new joint task force of the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNAMID was

established to develop the next integrated strategic framework by June 2017. This will coincide with the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the humanitarian response plan for the Sudan by the United Nations country team and its partners, thereby ensuring the complementarity of these planning processes.

B. Exit strategy

57. Further to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016) and the communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union of 13 June, the United Nations and the African Union continued discussions with the Government on the implementation of the UNAMID benchmarks and on the exit strategy within the framework of the joint working group. The group met in Khartoum from 17 to 20 October to discuss the status of implementation of the recommendations made in its report of 23 May. On 20 October, the strategic-level tripartite mechanism met in Khartoum and was informed of the group's consensus on a number of issues and discussions regarding the modalities, timing and scope of the exit strategy. The mechanism then agreed that the group would resume discussions to allow for further consultations with a view to concluding its work on a draft outcome document. While the group met again in Khartoum from 10 to 14 November, it did not reach a consensus on the practical steps and modalities towards this goal. The group agreed that the matter would be discussed further between the United Nations, the African Union and the Government at the principals level.

VIII. Financial aspects

58. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/284, appropriated the amount of $1,039.6 million for the maintenance of the Operation from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. As at 29 November, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNAMID amounted to $152.1 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $2,087.9 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 October, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 June, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IX. Observations

59. The armed conflict in Darfur has evolved significantly as a result of the military successes of the Government against the armed movements, with the fighting limited to a small part of the Jebel Marra. The Government has also taken steps to curb intercommunal tensions and to reduce crime, especially in the urban centres. In the areas in which active armed conflict has ceased or diminished, the number of civilians and communities directly exposed to its effects has fallen.

60. The evolution of the conflict and the relative calm in many areas of Darfur notwithstanding, crucial grievances regarding the conflict's origin remain unaddressed and long-term solutions need to be found to enable the voluntary return

of displaced persons and the reduction of intercommunal violence. Furthermore, civilians continue to be exposed to sources of grave risk, including the widespread prevalence of weapons, crime, intercommunal disputes and the activities of armed militias.

61. I welcome the declarations of a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities made by the Government and the armed movements in October. While taking note of their continued disagreement over several issues, I urge them to resume direct talks as soon as possible and to adopt a flexible approach aimed at achieving a formal agreement on the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access and moving speedily towards a political solution to the conflict. I once again call upon the leadership of SLA/AW to demonstrate its commitment to the people of Darfur and join the peace process without preconditions or further delay.

62. The National Dialogue process remains a crucial opportunity for the Sudan to address its internal political conflicts. I call upon the Government and the opposition to maintain their dialogue and work towards achieving the compromises necessary to ensure that this important process is fully inclusive and reflects the views and desires of all Sudanese citizens.

63. Following the formal dissolution of the Darfur Regional Authority, it is important to recognize the efforts made by the signatories to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur to meet their obligations under that agreement. Nevertheless, a number of the provisions on compensation and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, justice and reconciliation and disarmament, all of which are aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict, are yet to be implemented. While UNAMID and the United Nations country team will continue to work with and support the successor bodies now functioning under the Office of the President, I call upon the Governments of the Sudan and Qatar and the international community to maintain coordination for this purpose and to fulfil their previous financial pledges made in support of the Doha Document.

64. The absence of a comprehensive peace agreement, the emphasis on military action, the widespread presence of armed militias and the lack of a coherent policy and associated legislation on equitable access to and sustainable management of land and water continue to fuel intercommunal conflict in Darfur. Such situations frequently relapse into conflict in the absence of sufficient support for reconciliation processes and previously concluded peace agreements. While taking note of the efforts made to date, in particular by the state governments and local leaders, I call upon the Government and all stakeholders in Darfur to continue to work with UNAMID and the United Nations country team to strengthen the prevention and mitigation of intercommunal conflict and address its root causes.

65. The plight of the more than 2.6 million people displaced in Darfur remains a cause for major concern. I reiterate my call upon the Government to work with the displaced communities, UNAMID and humanitarian actors to promote the conditions necessary for their voluntary, safe and dignified return or resettlement. I also call upon the Government to provide unfettered access to UNAMID and humanitarian actors to conflict-affected communities to conduct monitoring and verification missions and deliver humanitarian assistance.

66. I am disturbed by the persistent human rights violations and abuses against civilians, in particular internally displaced persons, women and children, in Darfur. Ensuring accountability for serious human rights violations and tackling impunity are critical elements to achieving sustainable peace. I therefore urge the Government to work on strengthening law and order and enhancing accountability in order to create a protective environment. I also call upon the Government to ensure that disarmament efforts are applied to all civilians, regardless of their affiliation, and to take specific measures to control or disband militias, which have become one of the main sources of insecurity for civilians.

67. Delays in the clearance of United Nations-owned and contingent-owned equipment at Port Sudan continue to hamper the ability of UNAMID military and police personnel to implement their mandate effectively. The progress made with the issuance of visas for some personnel notwithstanding, I am concerned that, over the past year, the Government has granted only one visa for the Human Rights Section, which has a vacancy rate of 46 per cent. I urge the Government, consistent with its obligations under the status-of-forces agreement, to take urgent steps to remove all remaining restrictions on UNAMID operations.

68. In conclusion, I express my gratitude to the Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator, Martin Uhomoibhi, the mission leadership and all the personnel of UNAMID, the United Nations country team and humanitarian partners who continue to work tirelessly towards the pursuit of sustainable peace in Darfur in often very difficult conditions. I also commend my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, and former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Abdulsalami Abubakar of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for their steadfast commitment to sustainable peace and stability in the Sudan.

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